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ABSTRACT

Many education reformers criticize the mediocre state of learning in high schools in the United States. In order to insure that all students have equal access to high quality teaching, it is argued that educators must explore the potent connections among school setting, ability grouping, teaching methods, and student opportunity to learn. The research described in this paper analyzes student opportunity to learn U.S. history in 6 schools and 24 classrooms across various ability groups. The goal study's was to determine whether inequitable opportunity to learn exists within a varied sample of high school U.S. history classrooms, and to discern whether such differences can be explained by school level characteristics, teacher characteristics, and the ability group structure. The paper presents a conceptual framework and literature review; study design and sample; the opportunity structure established by school policy regarding ability grouping, class size, and curriculum/tests utilized; the degree of engagement instruction; school, teacher and ability group differences in the opportunity offered by instruction; and summary of school, teacher and ability group influences on student opportunity to learn. A number of complex interrelationships among school, teacher, and ability groups influences are observed. For example, questions concerning the equitable distribution of opportunity to learn U.S. history and critical skills such as discussion and writing are raised. Differences in teacher pedagogic skills, such as classroom organization and management, clearly influence student opportunity to learn. A number of figures and tables are included as is a 35-item bibliography. (DB)

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Equity and Opportunity to Learn in High School United States History Classes:

Comparisons Between Schools and Ability Groups*

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Paper presented at Session 31 15 of the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, April, 1990, Boston

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Multiple research and reform reports have lamented the mediocre state of student learning in American high schools (Boyer,1983; Sedlak,1986; Sizer,1984) Observational studies have analyzed hundreds of high school classrooms in which teacher led lecture/recitation and mundane rote tasks are the norm (McNeil,1986; Shaver,et al.,1979; Sirotnik,1983). Such teacher-dominated classrooms limit student opportunity to learn critical thinking skills since students are rarely asked to construct substantive knowledge (Newmann,1989). It is likely that such teaching especially hinders the learning of at-risk populations such as minority students, and students with low motivational or academic skills, as well as students in under-resourced schools In order to insure that all students have equal access to high quality teaching, we must explore the potent connections between school setting, ability grouping, teaching methods and student opportunity to learn

In an effort to advance the debate concerning equitable distribution of educational resources and concomitant opportunities for student learning, researchers have begun to look within schools and classrooms in order to understand how resources are transformed into educational processes (see Murphy & Hallinger,1989 for a review of these issues) The research to be described analyzes student opportunity to learn United States History in 6 schools and 24 classrooms across various ability groups While the data base contains information on the ability grouping structure, class size, curricular materials, and teacher background that will allow an initial assessment of resources and opportunity offered within the various classrooms, teacher interview and extensive classroom observational data provide means for a more critical and complete analysis of student opportunity to learn. The goal of this paper is to determine whether inequitable opportunity to learn exists within a varied sample of high school United States History classrooms, and to discern whether such differences can be explained by school level characteristics (e.g., student population served), teacher characteristics (e.g., content knowledge and pedagogical skills), and the ability grouping structure.

First, a conceptual framework and literature review will set the stage for the study to be described. After a brief description of the study design and sample, the second task will be to examine the opportunity structure established by school policy regarding ability grouping, class size, and curriculum/texts utilized. At this point it will be interesting to investigate the representation of minority students within the various ability groups. Third, the degree of engagement in instruction, as measured by instructional time and on-task behavior, will be examined across teachers and ability groups. The fourth step will be to investigate school, teacher, and ability group differences in the opportunity offered by instruction, including goals, academic tasks,

instructional techniques and methods used to hold students accountable for learning Finally, it will be possible to summarize school, teacher, and ability group influences on student opportunity to learn, and to raise questions concerning policy alternatives.

Conceptual Framework and Literature Review

In reflecting on the definition of equity as equal access to learning (Murphy & Hallinger,1989), it seems imperative that we look into classrooms to assess the type of instruction that is offered to particular students, as well as to examine the response of those students to the instruction. Certainly, a student can sit in a classroom where instruction is being offered and fail to access it due to lack of attention or involvement in the lesson. The concept of opportunity to learn provides one way to understand the influence of instruction on student learning. Opportunity to learn refers to the content, tasks, and teacher-student interactions involved in any learning situation, and serves as one way of judging the quality of instruction (Harnischfeger & Wiley,1985) In order to assess learning opportunities, the type of instruction that occurs within a time frame must be analyzed, as well as how meaningfully engaged students are in the instruction (Harnischfeger & Wiley,1985). Thus, the opportunity to learn that is afforded by teacher practice must be examined in two ways: first, how successful the teacher is in engaging students in instruction (can be analyzed as time spent in instruction and student on-task behavior); and second, the potential for student learning that is afforded by instruction (can be examined through teaching methods, and the degree of challenge evidenced by academic work, as well as teacher success in holding students accountable for completing tasks and reaching goals). According to this definition of opportunity to learn, both homework and in-class tasks must be examined, and special attention must be paid to whether students actually access, or become engaged in, the instruction which is offered

In order to understand why teachers of high school juniors offer students discrepant opportunity to learn, one must examine both the current school/ability group situation of the teachers and students, as well as the prior learning of the students. For example, some teachers work under various school level contextual constraints such as lack of texts and materials, poor school administrative and guidance services, ineffectual departmental leadership, and scant professional development opportunities (Little,1989) which may limit the resources teachers can call on in planning and implementing instruction. Many students reach the required United States History course after multiple years of limited opportunity to learn. This deficit in learning often begins in the first grade, as students are taught differential amounts of vocabulary (Dreeben & Barr,1988). During the elementary grades, discrepant

opportunity occurs not only within schools by ability group, but also across schools. For example, goals and teaching methods differ across elementary schools by SES level, as teachers in high SES schools have been observed to stress high cognitive goals by frequently utilizing group work and creative activities, while teachers in low SES schools stress independent work with text-based recitation and rote seatwork (Anyon,1981; Stodolsky,et al.,1981). Research across all grade levels in social studies has documented a preference in many less affluent/professional communities for a conservative curriculum which stresses coverage of factual content through text-based lecture/recitation methods (Jarolimek,1981; Fancett & Hawke,1982; Shaver,1981).

In addition to utilizing different goals and teaching methods with certain groups which may limit student opportunity to learn (see Gamoran & Berends,1987 for a review) teachers frequently encounter more classroom management problems with low ability groups. For example, studies carried out primarily in junior high classrooms document higher rates of off-task behavior and longer transition times in low ability classes (Evertson,1982; Lee & Gallagher,1986; Metz,1978). Although less well documented, high school students in lower ability groups may also experience reduced instructional time. For example, a study in high school science classrooms found that after disruptions it was easy for teachers to get honors students back on-task, while regaining attention in basic level classes was much more difficult (Gallagher & Tobin,1987). While the learning difficulties of these students may well increase management problems, teachers have been observed to alter their teaching methods (e.g., by offering fewer opportunities to participate, less variety in activities, fewer opportunities to acquire higher order thinking skills, and less encouragement) in ways that produce more off-task behavior (Evertson,1982; Metz,1978; Newmann,1989; Tobin & Gallagher,1987). While such boring and unchallenging teaching methods may cause younger students to be noticeably off-task, high school students often react differently. Given that older students seek to reduce risk, and are often concerned about grades, they may indeed be willing to exchange cooperation in boring, low-demand activities for an easy grade (Brophy,1983; Doyle,1983; Doyle & Sanford,1985). All who have spent time in high school classrooms will recognize this phenomena of students who cooperate, albeit frequently passively, with instruction. When such students are off-task, this behavior is commonly not disruptive to other students, but clearly the learning of the particular student is jeopardized. On the other hand, some students, especially those in basic classrooms, may be more noticeably disruptive in their off-task behavior in order to voice disapproval with the instructional process (see Page,1989 for an example). Frequently teachers alter instructional methods and lower

goals/standards to reassert their control in the classroom, or to prevent such disruptions in the first place (Doyle & Sanford,1985; Page,1989; Thornton,1988).

As a result of this interplay between school/ability group context, teaching methods, management strategies, and student reactions, many teachers lower their expectations for student learning (Ashton & Webb,1986; Murphy & Hallinger,1989). Some teachers use supposed lack of student interest or ability as a rationale for continually postponing more complex inquiry activities in order to cover the basics (Finley,1984, McKee,1988; Stake,et al.,1978). This can lead to a vicious cycle in which some social studies teachers, feeling that students will not read the text, summarize the text in a lecture/recitation format, allowing students to earn a passing grade without a great deal of effort (Memory & McGowan,1985; McNeil,1986). Especially in low ability classes, teachers have been observed to reduce opportunity to learn by requiring low-demand tasks, and then allowing students to begin such homework tasks in class, clearly reducing total learning/instructional time (see review by Murphy & Hallinger,1989). While teachers of basic classes often appear to care greatly for students and accommodate them so they will remain in school, such accommodation may come at the cost of limited engagement and usefulness of the learning (Miller,et al.,1988). Such "procedural" engagement that limits student opportunity to learn may be common in basic classes, but extends into many regular classes and across particular schools as well (Nystrand & Gamoran,1989). Although the relationships between the various factors which influence student opportunity to learn are complex, if we are to increase student learning it seems critical to learn more concerning the impact of school grouping, and teacher characteristics on instruction.

Study Design

In order to provide a comprehensive picture of instruction received by students, high school United States History classes were chosen for study since all students are required to take this course. To provide a range of school contexts (see Table 1 for selected school characteristics) for the study, two teachers were chosen at each of six schools which vary according to student SES and racial characteristics, suburban-small town location, departmental organization and staff development, as well as school administrative and financial situation.

Insert Table 1 about here

The varied sample of schools will be reordered for comparison on several issues relevant to the study. For example, Adams, Jefferson, and Truman are the most affluent schools in terms of resources per student, and all cater to a predominantly college-bound population. On the other hand, if the schools are organized according to SES (portion of low-income and minority students), Jefferson moves into the lower group, and Hoover, a small town and fairly homogeneous school, could be moved into the higher SES group. While the schools differ in terms of student background characteristics, all schools group students for instruction in United States History; however, they do differ in the number of levels (two to four).

An attempt was made to insure valid comparisons across teachers (see Table 2 for selected teacher characteristics) by requiring that all be experienced (at least three years) and that they possess the equivalent of a master's degree; however, the teachers still vary a great deal concerning their content and pedagogic knowledge, as well as years of experience (4-26 years) and teaching load.

Insert Table 2 about here

Teachers were selected in an attempt to represent basic, regular, and honors ability groups* within the schools. Given the experience and education requirements, as well as the rather flat ability grouping structure in some schools, it was not possible to locate twelve teachers who worked with different ability groups. Thus, as can be seen in Table 2, nine of the twelve teachers were observed in different United States History ability groups. Nonetheless, as can be noted in the Levels Taught column of the same table, all of the social studies departments in which these teachers worked required that teachers interact with a variety of ability groups. Due to the limitations placed on sampling by the characteristics mentioned above, all of the teachers involved in the study are male.

A vast array of study data is available for examining the type and quality of instruction presented as well as the various influences on teacher practice. Teacher practice was observed during nine to ten days of instruction in two of each teacher's classrooms, resulting in a data base of 228 lessons observed in 5 honors, 6 basic, and 13 regular United States History classes. Students typically enrolled in this course junior year; however, there were a few sophomores in classes at Grant High School, and a few

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* Advanced Placement (AP) classes were not observed since the external requirements of the program, especially the test component, so heavily influence the instructional choices made by teachers.

repeating seniors in many of the regular and basic classes. Observations were typically conducted during two non-adjacent weeks (January - May, 1989) in an attempt to capture breadth of teaching methods, while still understanding the unit context of the lessons. Intensive field notes were later coded via one minute time segments to discern how time was used instructionally over various formats such as lecture, lecture/recitation, lecture/response, lecture/discussion, seatwork, and audio-visual use. (See Table 3 for the definition of variables.)

Insert Table 3 about here

Support of instruction through task information, task elaboration, and feedback was also coded. Finally, non-instructional time was divided into key categories such as organizational chores, behavior management, and free time. Focal student behaviors (such as oral involvement and off-task behavior) denoting degree of engagement were continually noted during observations. In addition, information concerning the content and variety of academic tasks was gathered from observations and interviews. Data on the teaching environment was collected through department chair and teacher interviews, teacher background information was gathered during several hours of interviews with each teacher.

Opportunity Structure

Decisions concerning the structure in which teaching and learning take place are typically made at the district and school administrative levels. Depending on the district, teachers may have little input on issues such as the ability grouping structure, class size or curriculum and materials; nonetheless, these are critical variables which often have a direct impact on the opportunity offered to students. By examining Table 4, "Ability Grouping Structure in US History Classes", one can see the beginnings of a pattern of differential opportunity to learn across the six schools.

Insert Table 4 about here

In Table 4, the schools are listed according to SES characteristics of low-income and minority students, and certainly there is no particular ability grouping structure that corresponds to SES characteristics of schools. For example, the two schools that do not offer the Advanced Placement opportunity, Hoover (upper half SES) and Grant (lowest

SES), span the SES groups. In scanning the column noting the percent of US History sections at various ability group levels, two lower SES schools, Jefferson and Carter, represent the extremes. For example, Jefferson offers the highest percent of AP/honors sections (51.7), while Carter offers the lowest percent of honors sections (6.6) and the largest percent of basic sections (40.0). Jefferson is clearly unique concerning the heterogeneity of its student population; nonetheless, it is closer to Adams than the other low SES schools in the skew of the ability grouping structure towards AP/honors sections.

An interesting policy decision which appears linked to ability grouping is class size. As can be noted in Table 4, the three districts with highest per pupil expenditures, Adams, Truman, and Jefferson, choose to set class size caps for both AP and basic sections. Only one other school, Carter, sets a maximum (albeit a larger number) on the size of basic classes. Interestingly enough, when the average class size (as measured by the average number of students present on the days of observation) is examined in Table 5, one notices that all of the basic classes, even those in schools without class size caps, are relatively small.

Insert Table 5 about here

The most interesting observation concerning the honors classes is the extremely small size of the classes at Hoover (13) and Grant (9), schools which serve a less college-bound student population. Recalling from Table 4 that Hoover has only two honors sections, and Grant only three, if all of those sections are relatively small, then the ability grouping structures within these schools are even more heavily skewed toward regular and/or basic classes.

While all schools in the study mandated that the US History class be a one year survey course, another school/departmental decision that influences opportunity to learn is the choice of text. Since Table 5 is organized by ability group, it is possible to scan the column "Intended Text Level" and note that most regular and honors classes use a regular level text, while the basic classes typically utilize a text with a lower reading level. Two interesting exceptions should be noted. First, at Jefferson, all AP and honors level students are challenged by a college level text*; given that over 50% of the US History sections are for students in these advanced classes, a substantial number

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* Some regular students were incorporated in a few honors sections, including Mr. Jewel's. These students used a regular level text.

of students would seem to have this increased opportunity to learn from an advanced text. Second, although Mr. Gregory at Grant contended that his basic students could read the regular level text, he organized the low-level academic tasks in a way that students did not have to read the text to succeed.

The ramifications of differences in the opportunity structure will only become apparent later in the paper when disparities in instructional time and academic tasks are shown between honors and other ability groups. In addition, disparate opportunity in terms of goals and tasks will be seen across schools serving different student populations. Nonetheless, before completing this section on the opportunity structure, the representation of minority students among various ability groups should be noted. Examination of the middle columns in Table 5 reveals that minority students are underrepresented in honors groups, and generally overrepresented in basic classes. For example at Jefferson, with 45.5% of the total student body belonging to minority groups, only 10% and 20% of the honors, while 71% of the regular, and 95% of the basic students were Black or Hispanic. Similar trends can be seen for the other schools with substantial minority populations, Carter, Hoover, and Grant*. Analyses of instructional activities within classrooms will determine whether students in certain schools, ability groups, or members of particular minority groups receive differential opportunity to learn.

Engagement in Instruction

In order for students to learn, they must be engaged in instruction. The study data provide two primary ways to assess student engagement: instructional time and degree of on-task behavior (measured actually as amount of off-task behavior observed). Differences in engagement will be discerned and explained according to ability group, general teacher skills, and differential teacher treatment of groups.

Opportunity Afforded by Instructional Time

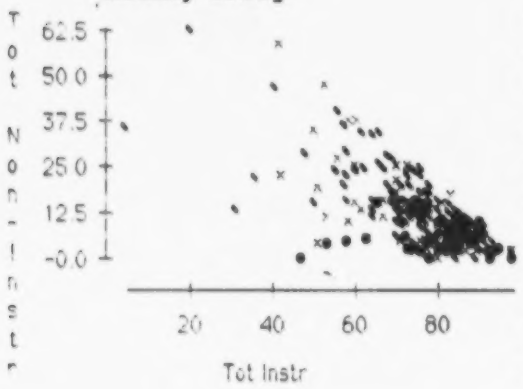
Allocated time, or period length, ranged from 40 to 60 minutes within the sample. For the purpose of this analysis, it is not the amount of allocated time, but the way the teacher uses that time, which is important. Total class time was divided into instructional time (e.g., oral instruction, seatwork, audio-visual), instructional support (information about instructional tasks), and non-instruction (e.g., organizational

* Minority students were simply noted by observation. In schools with sizeable Hispanic populations teachers were asked if Hispanic students were present and if students had difficulty with English. It is possible that a few minority students could not be identified with this method, especially at Truman.

chores, social time, free time), with these three categories calculated as the percent of total time. (Refer back to Table 3 for definitions of all subcategories.) The opportunity to learn in a given class can be inferred through analysis of scatterplots comparing the percent of total time spent in instruction and non-instructional pursuits. All 228 class sessions are plotted, with various groupings and teachers identified in a series of plots in order to discern whether instructional time differs by group, teacher, or possibly the school.

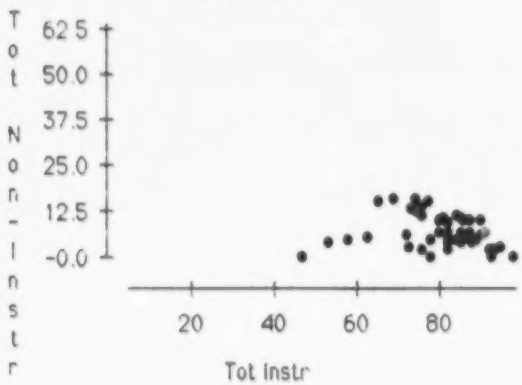
In the first pair of plots, symbols are used to differentiate the lessons by ability group.

Fig. 1- Use of Time by Ability Group



Honors= • Regular= \ Basic= x

Fig. 2- Use of Time in Honors Classes

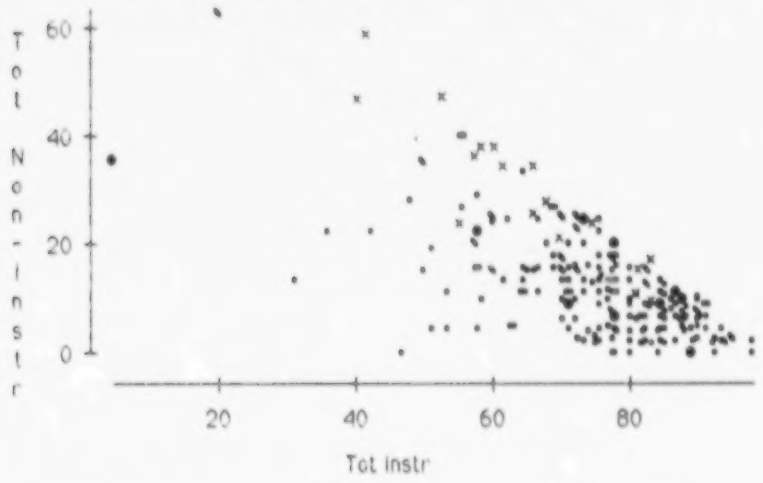


Honors= •

Examination of Figure 1 shows that all of the lessons in which more than 25% of total time was spent in non-instructional pursuits (y axis) occurred in basic or regular classes. Although the majority of points bunch in the lower right corner, lessons in which more than 75% of total time was spent in instruction, Figure 2 shows clearly that honors classes uniformly experience a high percent of instructional time, low amounts of non-instruction, and a few lessons which are high in instructional support. Thus, regardless of school or teacher characteristics, honors classes receive more opportunity in terms of instructional time.

Of course, not all teachers of regular or basic groups allow non-instructional pursuits to consume a great deal of time. As can be seen in Figure 3, classes of four teachers (shown in plot symbols instead of dots) account for all of the lessons in which more than 35% of total time was spent in non-instructional pursuits.

Fig. 3- Teachers/Classes Accounting for Lessons with High Rates of Non-Instructional Time



Mr Gregory= x Mr Armstrong= \ Mr Hurley reg= ▫ Mr Jones reg= •

Two of these teachers, Gregory (x) and Armstrong (\)* manifested high rates of non-instructional time across both of their classes. Essentially, these teachers were poor managers of time and/or had low expectations concerning what should be accomplished within one class period

In contrast, the other two teachers highlighted in the plot, Hurley (▫) and Jones (•), only allowed a high rate of non-instructional time in their regular classes. As can be seen more clearly in Figure 4 on the next page, showing only the classes of these two teachers, both Mr Hurley and Mr Jones offer more instructional time to their honors classes (shown by the x and \ symbols in the lower right corner of the plot). On the other hand, all of the exceptional days with high rates of non-instructional time occurred in the regular classes (shown by the ▫ and • symbols). Certainly this is the most insidious form of lowered expectations in which these teachers clearly offer less opportunity to their lower ability groups. In the case of Mr. Jones, students were often given more free time, no task was assigned, or time was spent in behavior management. Alternately, Mr. Hurley spent time socializing with his regular students, extended the amount of time necessary for organizational chores, and reduced instructional time by having students grade their work in class.

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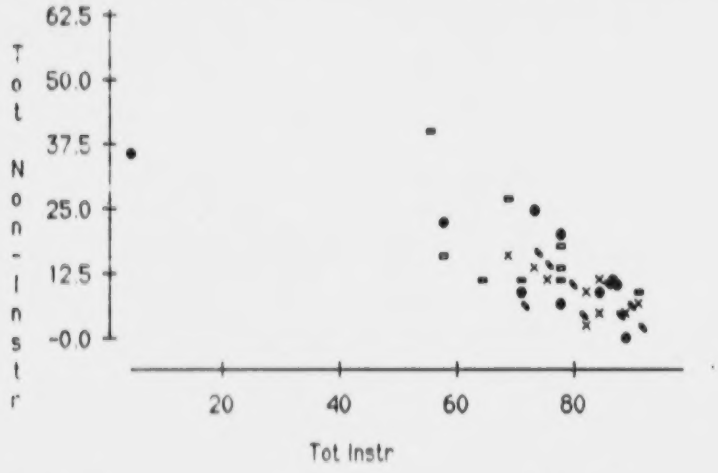
* The outlying point for Mr. Armstrong occurred because of a school-wide emergency drill during his regular class period. Despite this day, the regular class experienced an extremely high amount of non-instructional time.

Fig. 4- Teacher Differentiation of Instructional Time by Ability Group



Hurley H= x Hurley R= ▭ Jones H= \ Jones R=●

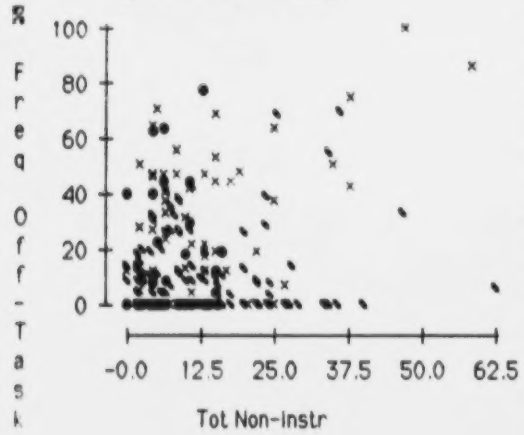
Finally, one must note that variance in instructional time does not seem to be related to school characteristics. The teachers who reduce opportunity to learn by decreasing instructional time are found at four of the schools in the sample. These schools serve both a college-bound student body (Adams and Jefferson), as well as populations with less focussed post-secondary aspirations (Hoover and Grant).

Limitation of Opportunity by High Rates of Off-Task Behavior

While it is admittedly difficult in this type of research to estimate degree of student learning, it is possible to assess whether or not students are likely to learn based on their degree of engagement in the instruction offered. Certainly, if a student is off-task (socializing with a peer, engaged in non-academic pursuits, sleeping, etc.), the likelihood that he or she will learn is greatly reduced. Off-task behavior was noted continually during observations, and a count of instances of off-task behavior was made for each student. Frequently, the off-task behavior was not disruptive to the rest of the class, but clearly interfered with the learning the the individual student. For each class session, the percent of students frequently off-task (three or more times during the class session) was computed, and this figure is plotted on the y axis along with total non-instructional time on the x axis.

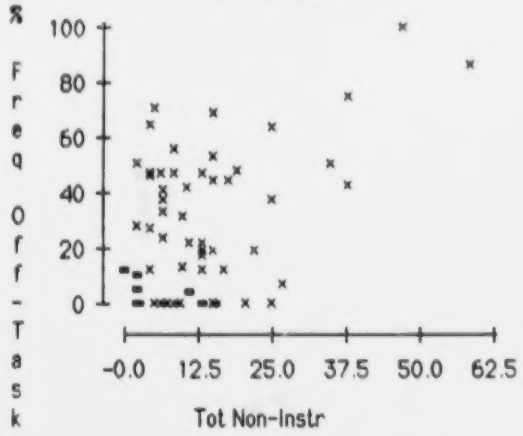
The first pair of plots examines off-task behavior by ability group.

Fig. 5- Percent of Students Off-Task by Ability Group



Honors= • Regular= \ Basic= x

Fig. 6- Percent of Students Off-Task in Basic Classes

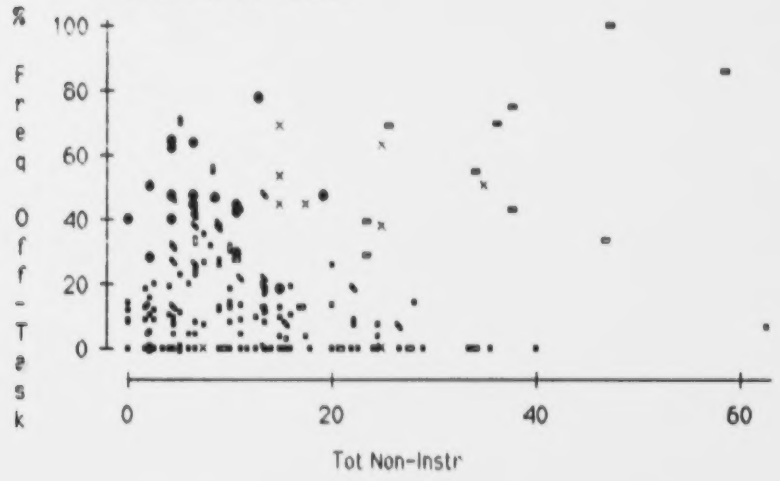


Basic= x Mr. Jewel Basic= ▬

In Figure 5 one can see that some regular and basic classes experience high rates of both off-task behavior and non-instructional time. All of the honors lessons with over 25% of students off-task belong to Mr. Gage at Grant High School. The basic classes are shown separately in Figure 6, since the most off-task behavior occurs in this ability group. What is fascinating to note in this plot is that five of the six basic class teachers consistently have difficulty maintaining on-task behavior; only Mr. Jewel at Jefferson High School (note the rectangular plot symbols in the lower left corner of the plot) consistently maintains low rates of non-instructional time and off-task behavior. Given the potential for quite different rates of motivation in honors and basic classes, it is perhaps sensible to conclude that it is exceptional for a teacher to have difficulty engaging an honors class, and that it takes an exceptional teacher to maintain consistently high levels of engagement in a basic class.

While these ability group differences seem rather strong, interesting variations in teacher skills and situations are also apparent. For example, if we examine the next version of the off-task behavior plot, Figure 7 on the next page, and select the teachers that account for all of the lessons in which more than 40% of students are frequently off-task, five teachers can be identified and shown by plot symbols. Three of these teachers, Gregory (▬), Gage (•), and Thomas (\) experience high rates of off-task behavior in both of their classes While each teacher works with a basic class, they all also experience difficulty maintaining attention within their regular or honors class.

Fig. 7- Teachers/Classes Accounting for Lessons with a High Percent of Students Off-Task

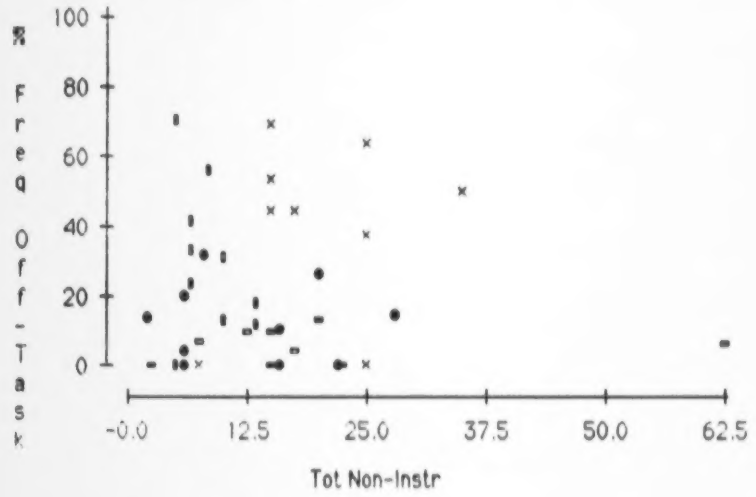


Mr Gregory= ▭ Mr Gage= • Mr. Thomas= \
Mr. Armstrong Basic= x Mr. Clark Basic= ▯

As in the case of non-instructional time in which two teachers (Gregory and Armstrong) simply seemed to be poor managers of time, these three teachers (Gregory, Gage, and Thomas) seem to lack instructional and classroom management skills which would allow them to successfully engage the vast majority of students in instruction.

Nonetheless, returning to the issue of the influence of ability grouping on the ability of teachers to maintain on-task behavior, it does seem that engaging basic classes is a difficult task. The remaining two teachers who account for the high off-task data points. Armstrong (x) and Clark (▯) only experience serious problems with off-task behavior in their basic classes This can be seen clearly in the next plot, Figure 8 on the next page, in which the classes of these teachers are shown. Both Mr. Armstrong and Mr. Clark experience higher rates of off-task behavior in their basic (x and▯) than regular (▭and •) classes. This relationship is especially clear for Mr. Armstrong, whose basic class was the most chaotic in the sample. While the nature of the students explains much of the difference in behavior, the fact that Mr. Armstrong utilized a greater variety of teaching methods (lecture, audio-visual, recitation, more varied academic tasks, etc) in his regular than basic class is clearly an explanatory factor

Fig. 8- Teachers Experiencing High Rates of Off-Task Behavior Primarily in Their Basic Class



Armstrong R= ▬ Armstrong B= x Clark R= ● Clark B= ▯

In the case of off-task behavior, it is possible that certain school characteristics might explain differential teacher success in engaging students. For example, both teachers at Grant (the lowest SES school in which teachers coped with a lack of resources and problematic school leadership) had difficulty maintaining on-task behavior in all of their classes. On the other hand, teachers across four schools serving varied communities experienced high rates of off-task behavior. If reduction of opportunity by both non-instructional time and off-task behavior are considered, selected teachers in all six schools can be observed to truncate student opportunity to learn in some way. Thus, it does not seem to be school level factors, as much as the interaction of ability grouping and teacher characteristics that explain differential opportunity for students to be engaged in instruction.

Opportunity Offered by Instruction

While classes of particular teachers, and to an extent of certain ability groups, are engaged for a lower amount of time in instruction, the next step is to discern the opportunity offered to students via that instruction. Unless a student undertakes a great deal of independent study, or receives additional instruction on a topic from another source, what he or she learns concerning US History is greatly shaped by the goals held by the teacher, as well as the content, tasks, and instructional methods utilized by the teacher with a particular group of students. In addition, student

learning is also shaped by the various techniques (e.g., relationship between seatwork and homework, use of class time for grading, and degree of clarity and timeliness in task assignments and feedback) that teachers utilize to express expectations and hold students accountable for learning objectives. Differential opportunity to learn via these aspects of instruction will be analyzed across schools, individual teachers, and ability groups.

Degree of Challenge/Opportunity Offered by Goals, Tasks, and Instructional Methods

Teachers were asked during interviews to explain the major goals held for each of their classes of US History. Interestingly, all teachers stated that they held the same goals for each of their ability groups, though later in the interview many spoke of using different teaching methods, tasks, standards, materials, and classroom management techniques for each ability group. As can be seen from Table 6 which lists the goals held by each teacher for all of their US History classes, the majority of teachers spoke of content and cultural literacy goals, common goals for social studies educators.

Insert Table 6 about here

What is fascinating is that only the teachers at the three schools serving primarily college-bound students (Adams, Jefferson, and Truman- shown in the top half of the table) included the development of general or social science specific critical thinking skills among their goals. Clearly there are differences in school level characteristics (e.g., population served, leadership of the school and social studies department, and characteristics of teachers hired and developed by the school/department) that influence the goals these teachers hold for their students. One interesting question is whether the teachers who work with different ability groups actually succeed in achieving the same goals for both classes. As has already been shown in the engagement section, a number of teachers make the task of meeting their goals more difficult by reducing instructional time and failing to engage large numbers of students consistently in instruction, especially in a few regular classes and the majority of basic classes.

The academic work required in a class, especially written tasks, tell much concerning the level of challenge and opportunity offered to students. As can be seen in Table 7, "Characteristics of Academic Work in US History Classes", most written work in these US History classes was of four types: defining vocabulary terms, completing

objective worksheets, completing short answer questions, and more complex writing tasks and projects

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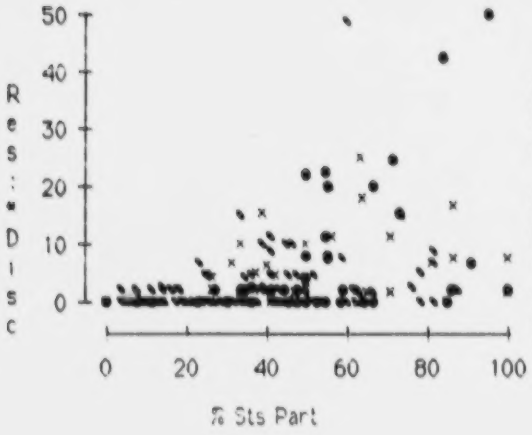
Insert Table 7 about here

Though nine to ten days in a classroom does not allow compilation of the entire variety of academic tasks assigned, the common pattern of academic work became quickly clear in most cases. For example, students in Mr. Curtis' regular classes routinely defined vocabulary, answered the objective chapter review items, and completed publisher worksheets for each chapter. Once again, this table is organized with Adams, Jefferson, and Truman (the three schools serving primarily college-bound students) in the upper half. As can easily be noted, common tasks in these schools include short answer questions and more complex writing projects, while students in the other three schools are more likely to be defining vocabulary and completing worksheets, with little evidence of substantive writing tasks. The exceptions to this rule are the two additional honors classes (Mr. Hurley at Hoover and Mr. Gage at Grant) who do require writing, and the basic class taught by Mr. Thomas at Truman; these basic students (unlike their peers at Adams and Jefferson) completed only worksheets with no additional writing tasks. While there is some differentiation of tasks by ability group, it is the school attended, and the characteristics of the students and teachers, that is of greater importance in determining whether students will be challenged by writing tasks and projects.

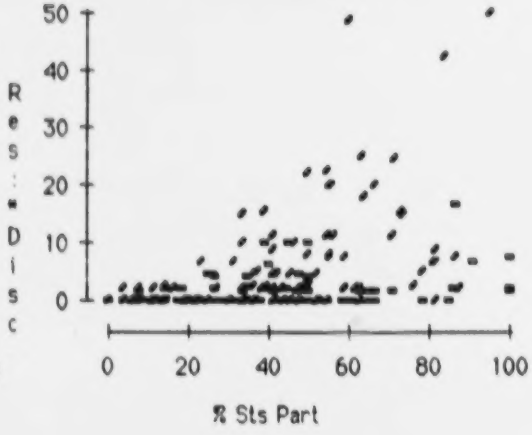
Besides goals and academic tasks, some indicator of instructional methods should be examined in order to get a sense of the opportunity offered within a US History classroom. In the study, all oral instruction was coded on a continuum running from lecture and recitation, to the more interactive categories of response and discussion. (Refer back to Table 3 for definitions of these oral instructional formats.) This sample of social studies classes was not unusual in that the lecture and recitation categories were most heavily used. Thus, for the purpose of analysis, the more interactive categories of response, lecture/discussion, and pure discussion were combined and plotted as the percent of total time spent in response:discussion (y axis). On the x axis is plotted the percent of students who participated orally in the lesson. While one might hypothesize that honors classes would spend more time in discussion-like activities, this was not consistently true in this sample. As can be seen in Figure 9, honors, basic, and regular classes are represented among the lessons in which a relatively high percent of time (more than 5%) is spent in response:discussion.

Fig. 9- Percent of Total Time in Response:Discussion by Ability Group



Honors= ● Regular= \ Basic= x

Fig. 10- Percent of Total Time in Response:Discussion by School (Percent of Students College-Bound)



High= / Low= ▭ College-Bound

Referring back to Table 7 and the average amount of time spent in response:discussion within each class*, one sees that the most heavy users of this instructional method teach within Adams and Jefferson, the two schools in which the opportunity structure is most skewed toward AP and honors. It is also interesting to note that while a few teachers have a higher average in their upper ability group class (e.g., Anderson), a couple of teachers spend more time in discussion-like activities in their basic classes (e.g., Armstrong). For the most part, challenging students to engage in more substantive oral interaction seems to be determined by teacher characteristics, which may be somewhat linked to school characteristics. Examination of the second version of the response:discussion plot, Figure 10, shows clearly that the three schools serving a higher portion of college-bound students (Truman, but especially Adams and Jefferson, shown by the / plot symbol) account for the majority of lessons in which substantial discussion occurred.

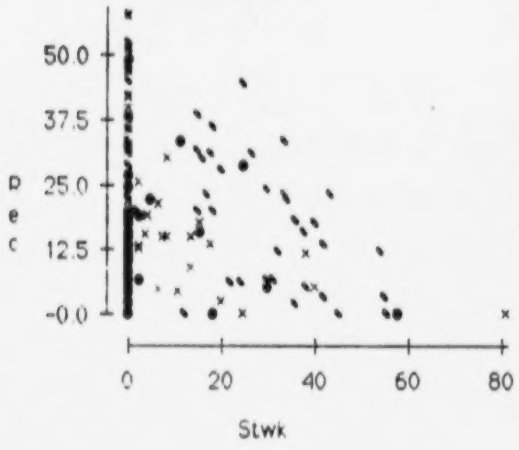
Opportunity Via Accountability for Academic Work and Learning

One instructional technique which is closely associated with expectations concerning academic work and homework is the use of in-class seatwork. Of course,

* While examination of the average is not as appropriate for describing activities within a classroom, scanning the averages is helpful for comparison purposes.

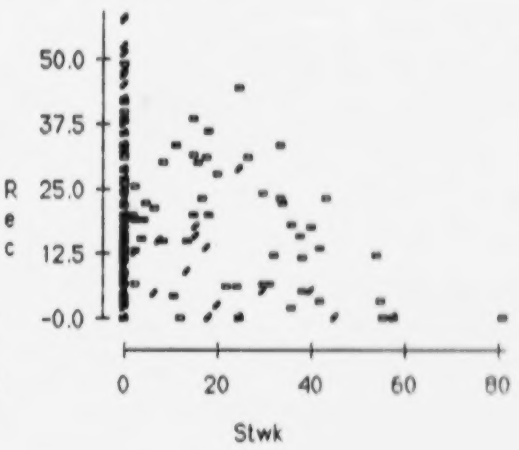
seatwork can be used to accomplish a number of purposes (e.g., engage students in a simulation activity or cooperative group learning); however, in most instances within this sample, students were requested to complete worksheets, define vocabulary, or answer questions during seatwork. Since seatwork is frequently employed in the classes of teachers who also heavily utilize recitation, the percent of total time spent in each of these formats is plotted, with seatwork on the x axis and recitation on the y axis. As can be seen in Figure 11, seatwork is used heavily in some regular classes and frequently for brief periods in many basic classes.

Fig. 11- Use of Seatwork and Recitation by Ability Group



Honors= • Regular= \ Basic= x

Fig. 12- Use of Seatwork and Recitation by by School



High= / Low= ▪ College-Bound

While basic classes which utilize seatwork are found in various schools, the teachers of regular classes who frequently utilize seatwork and recitation (Hyde, Hurley, Curtis, and Clark) are located in two of the schools which serve a less college-bound student body. The heavier use of seatwork at Hoover, Carter, and Grant (the schools serving a lower proportion of college-bound students) can be seen in the second version of the seatwork plot, Figure 12, by the prevalence of the rectangular plot symbols. What is most striking about the use of seatwork is the tendency for a number of teachers to allow students to begin their homework in-class, or to have seatwork completely replace homework. As can be seen in the first data column of Table 8, "Accountability for Academic Work in US History Classrooms", six teachers in ten classrooms reduce in-class instructional time, as well as their expectations for homework, by allowing students to begin homework in class.

Insert Table 8 about here

Note once again that in the three schools serving a more college-bound student body, only two of the basic class teachers (Armstrong and Thomas) lower their expectations concerning academic work by allowing seatwork to reduce or replace homework. Alternately, in eight of the twelve classrooms serving regular or basic students at Hoover, Carter, and Grant, teachers reduce opportunity to learn in this manner.

Additional evidence concerning the degree of opportunity provided by tasks, methods of holding students accountable, and the feedback students receive can be found in the methods teachers utilize to grade student work. For example, as can be seen on the left hand side of Table 8, teachers can grade academic work outside of class, or grade tasks in-class with or without student assistance. Clearly school differences exist in terms of student grading, none of the teachers in Adams, Jefferson, or Truman reduced instructional time (and their own grading time outside of class) by having students grade in-class, while there were a number of instances observed in the three schools serving a less college-bound student body. Most of these teachers also frequently graded student work while students completed another seatwork task, reducing the amount of time that the teacher could actively monitor student learning. As is logical, use of these in-class grading techniques is related to the type of task assigned. Commonly, tasks graded in this fashion were objective in nature (worksheets or vocabulary) that could be easily graded by the teacher or students with a cursory glance. Such low challenge tasks which are graded in a cursory or infrequent manner greatly reduce the potential for challenge and feedback students need to continue their learning

Feedback to students on their performance, or teacher efforts to encourage improvement in future performance, is typically given either to the entire class orally, or is written on individual student tasks (see the right side of Table 8). While there may be a school-linked trend in that the teachers who rely more on in-class grading offer less written feedback, the total instances of feedback observed seem to vary over teachers. For instance, when the data were reviewed for evidence of lack of clarity in terms of task due dates and timeliness in providing feedback, no trends can be seen in terms of school or ability group. Of the six teachers who exhibited lack of clarity and timeliness, five also had difficulty limiting non- instructional time and/or maintaining on-task behavior (Armstrong, Jones, Clark, Gage, and Gregory). The ability and willingness to organize tasks, clearly explain them, and provide timely and substantive

feedback may well be related to classroom organization and management skills which influence the degree of student engagement.

Trends in Opportunity to Learn by School, Teacher, and Group

By reviewing the findings of this study, it is possible to confirm that differences in opportunity to learn US History indeed exist across the 6 schools, 12 teachers, and 24 classrooms. If the key indicators of opportunity via engagement in instruction are categorized in terms of school, teacher, or ability group influences, fairly complex interrelationships can be observed. Starting with school level trends, use of certain academic tasks, response/discussion, and seatwork are related in this sample to distinctions in community served. For the most part, writing tasks and response/discussion occur more often in Adams, Jefferson, and Truman high schools, while worksheets, recitation, and seatwork are more frequently seen in Hoover, Carter, and Grant, high schools which serve fewer college-bound students. Holding skill goals (general and critical social science critical thinking) for US History students is clearly correlated with school level factors; students at Adams, Jefferson, and Truman are more likely to engage in tasks and instruction that teachers hope will allow students to reach such goals.

Many of these indicators of educational opportunity are influenced by a combination of school, teacher, and grouping characteristics. For example, use of response/discussion and seatwork are correlated with school differences in student population served; however, these instructional techniques also appear to differ by teacher style and background characteristics. In addition, use of instructional time, ability to maintain on-task student behavior, and timeliness of feedback all seem somewhat related to idiosyncratic teacher differences in classroom organization and management skills.

Finally, while strong trends in opportunity can often be seen according to school or teacher characteristics, exceptions often seem to be related to ability group. For example, the honors classes of Mr. Hurley and Mr. Gage resemble other honors classes more than classes within the same school in terms of academic tasks, and seatwork is generally used in basic and many regular classes. Several teachers appear to diminish their expectations for lower ability classes by providing less instructional time, and basic classes definitely seem more difficult to manage in terms of maintaining on-task behavior.

While capacity to keep students highly engaged in instruction seems to be related to teacher and ability group characteristics, most instructional issues appear strongly influenced by teacher and school level characteristics. In fact, it is logical

that schools hire and nurture a certain type of teacher that best fits the goals and desires of the community. Two teacher background characteristics associated with content knowledge can be examined in order to explain trends seen by school in goals and tasks offered to students. Table 9 gathers information concerning goals and academic tasks along with the history content knowledge and reading habits of the teachers.

Insert Table 9 about here

Only the seven teachers who completed a major or more in history with some graduate level coursework possess strong reading habits in which they actively extend their content knowledge by reading history books and/or scholarly journals. All of the teachers at Adams, Jefferson, and Truman possess strong content knowledge, while only one teacher at the other three schools, Mr. Gage and Grant, is so highly educated. The remaining teachers at Grant, Hoover, and Carter do not possess graduate work in history, and do not extend their content knowledge in any meaningful way. Given this strong relationship between teacher knowledge and school, it does not appear that teachers are allocated differentially across ability groups within these schools, at least in terms of the amount of history coursework. For example, Mr. Gage, the only highly educated history teacher in the schools serving a less college-bound student body, taught an honors class, but he was also assigned to a basic class. It is perhaps possible that teachers with weaker reading habits are more often assigned to regular and basic US History sections, but the sample is too small to make that conclusion.

The influence of communities/schools in hiring, attracting, or nurturing certain types teachers who stress particular goals and tasks is tremendous. If Table 9 is scanned across the entries for Adams, Jefferson, and Truman high schools one sees general agreement between extensive history background, strong reading habits, a skill goal orientation, and emphasizing writing projects among academic tasks. The only exception to this trend is that Mr. Thomas' basic class at Truman is not required to do any writing or homework. Alternately, a slightly different pattern can be observed if the schools are reorganized according to SES (low-income and minority students), as seen in the summary Table 10 on the next page.

Table 10

Summary Comparison of Reading Habits, Goals, and Tasks by Teacher History Background and School SES

School by SES	Teacher by History Level	*	Reading Habits	Goals*	Tasks*		
					H	R	B
High SES	Graduate History	4					
Adams	Anderson, Armstrong		strong, strong	s,s	w	w,w	w
Truman	Taney, Thomas		strong, strong	s,s		w,w,w	o
Hoover	Undergraduate History	2					
	Hurley, Hyde		average, average	c,c	w	o,o,o	
Low SES	Graduate History	3					
Jefferson	Jewel, Jones		strong, strong	s,s	w,w	w	w
Carter	Gage		strong	c	w		o
Grant	Undergraduate History	3					
	Clark, Curtis		weak, average	c,c		o,o,o	o
	Gregory		weak	c		o	o

*s- skills, c-content; *w-writing tasks required, o-other tasks - Honors, Regular, Basic

When organized by SES, Hoover joins the upper SES group and Jefferson is grouped among the lower three schools. According to SES, the teachers possessing graduate work in history and strong reading habits are distributed across the cells, and most strive toward skill goals by requiring student writing. Although Mr. Gage at Grant stresses a content goal, he does require writing of his honors class; the basic class is not typically required to do any substantive writing. Teachers completing their history coursework only at the undergraduate level are found in schools serving both higher and lower SES students; however, all hold only content goals for their students and typically require other academic tasks besides extensive writing. Once again, the exception concerns an honors class. Hr. Hurley, who possesses only a minor in history and average reading habits, also holds only content goals for his students, but does occasionally require writing of his honors class. Like Mr. Gage, he does not require writing of his lower (regular) ability group class.

Thus, school, teacher, and group influences seem highly interrelated. Adams, Jefferson, and Truman hire/nurture highly educated history teachers who stress skill goals by requiring students to complete writing tasks. Alternately, Hoover, Carter, Grant generally hire teachers who have solely undergraduate level history training, only content goals are stressed, and teachers generally do not require writing of students. Exceptions to this trend are the upwards challenge received by honors students in the schools serving a less college-bound population, and the lowering of expectations for one basic class in a more college preparatory setting. Ability to

engage students does not seem related to teacher content knowledge, but rather to pedagogic knowledge/skills and somewhat to ability group. Ultimately, opportunity to learn would seem to be most limited in the classes of teachers who offer little academic challenge and then fail to consistently engage students in that instruction (e.g., Mr. Gregory). Opportunity to learn in all but one of the basic classes (Mr. Jewel) is limited by high rates of off-task behavior and is frequently confounded by low academic challenge. Especially in the three schools serving a less college-bound population (Hoover, Carter, and Grant), opportunity to be challenged academically is rare if you are a student in a regular or basic class. Thus, opportunity to learn can be limited by lack of teacher pedagogic/management skills, a less academic orientation of students and faculty, or the lowered expectations/management difficulties sometimes associated with regular or basic ability groups

The study raises questions concerning the equitable distribution of opportunity to learn United States History and critical skills such as discussion and writing. For example, while social studies reform groups continue to call for increased emphasis on the development of critical thinking skills (e.g., National Commission on Social Studies in the Schools 1989), the likelihood that students in certain schools and ability groups will have an opportunity to learn such skills may not be great. Since these teachers working within schools serving a less college-bound population tended to offer such opportunities only to honors students, it will be a difficult task for educational reformers to increase the learning opportunities of the majority of students in such schools. To the extent that teacher knowledge (as examined in this paper in terms of history background and reading habits) influences student opportunity to learn, this study also raises questions concerning the equitable distribution of teaching talent. For example, it would be interesting to further explore whether teacher knowledge substantially shapes the goals and tasks the teacher selects for students, or if the teacher consciously reads and responds to the desires and needs of the students and community. If the former is true, then perhaps it would be necessary for schools like Carter or Hoover to hire and nurture highly knowledgeable history teachers in order to meaningfully upgrade the learning opportunities of their students.

In addition, differences in teacher pedagogic skills, such as classroom organization and management, clearly influence student opportunity to learn. Teachers experiencing difficulty engaging students in instruction can be found in any school and at any ability level; nonetheless, basic classes do present exceptional challenges to teachers. Certainly, teacher education, at both the preservice and professional development levels, should emphasize the critical development of such skills. In regard to professional development and clinical supervision, it may be

particularly helpful to discern whether a teacher has classroom management deficits in regard to all classes, or if a teacher is experiencing particular difficulty with a lower ability group.

Since basic level classes seem unusually difficult to manage, one might question the policy of grouping such students together. While it is perhaps true that scattering these students over regular groups would decrease management problems, instruction, especially the reading level of materials, probably still needs to be tailored to the needs of these students. In addition, teachers faced with extremely heterogeneous groups (consider the example of Hoover with no basic groups), may simply lower goals and expectations in an effort to insure that all students can succeed. If students remain grouped in order to facilitate instruction, we would hope that teachers could keep their expectations high for all ability groups in order to reach their stated goals. In this sample, Mr. Anderson and Mr. Jewel stand out as positive examples of teachers tailoring instruction and yet keeping expectations high in order to meet the same goals for students at various ability levels. Within schools, perhaps we need to consider novel approaches to dealing with students and ability grouping. For example, Mr. Jewel's "honors" class at Jefferson High School allows regular and honors students to work together in the same classroom. While each group reads a text appropriate to their reading level, all students complete the same, highly challenging tasks. In addition, Jefferson operates another program in which US History teachers work together as a team to plan instruction for a range of ability groups. Although each teacher and ability group uses tailored reading materials and regularly meets alone, frequently the different ability groups interact in the same activity, holding each group to the same challenging level of goals and standards. Ultimately, a more equitable distribution of opportunity to learn will require upgrading the knowledge and skills of some teachers, reorienting the priorities and resources of certain schools and departments, and reexamining the ramifications of ability grouping structures.

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Tables

Table 1

Selected School Characteristics*

School	#Adams	#Jefferson	#Truman	Hoover	Carter	Grant
School Enrollment	1798	3021	1655	1435	1472	913
Cost Per Pupil	$8,021	$7,826	$7,964	$3,232	$6,760	$6,405
% Students Low-Income	0.4	22.1	4.4	11.2	25.3	37.2
% Students White	88.0	51.5	83.2	83.4	36.9	24.8
% Students Black	0.1	41.8	1.8	1.3	43.4	63.2
% Students Hispanic	1.1	3.6	8.8	13.2	18.8	8.9
% Students Asian	10.8	3.1	5.8	1.1	0.4	2.4
Mobility Rate	2.8	6.4	16.9	18.3	24.9	28.5
Attendance Rate	93.4	93.7	92.7	91.9	89.4	82.8
Graduation Rate	98.0	91.2	90.9	87.2	67.1	62.9
Average ACT Score	21.6	19.9	19.3	18.8	16.3	13.4
% Students Taking ACT	97.4	77.6	72.1	35.7	25.1	56.7

*Data from 1988-1989 School District Reports to the State

All schools are located in suburban communities of a major Midwestern metropolitan area, with the exception of Hoover, which is located in a small town.

Schools serving predominantly college-bound students.

Table 2

Selected Teacher Characteristics

School/ Teacher	Classes Observed			Years Exp	No Preps	Levels Taught*					# Sports Coached
	Honors	Regular	Basic			AP	H	R	Mixed	B	
Adams H.S.											
Mr. Anderson	x	x		16	4	1	3	1			
Mr. Armstrong		x	x	22	3			2	2	1	
Jefferson H.S.											
Mr. Jewel	x		x	12	3	1	2			2	
Mr. Jones	x	x		26	3		2	1	2		
Truman H.S.											
Mr. Taney		x x		4	2			4		1	1
Mr. Thomas		x	x	9	2			3		2	3
Hoover H.S.											
Mr. Hurley	x	x		9	4		2	3			2
Mr. Hyde		x x		12	2			3	2		1
Carter H.S.											
Mr. Clark		x	x	20	2			2		3	
Mr. Curtis		x x		12	3	1		4			2
Grant H.S.											
Mr. Gage	x		x	25	3		2		1	2	retired
Mr. Gregory		x	x	26	3			2	2	1	retired
Totals	5	13	6								

*Advanced Placement, Honors, Regular, Mixed, Basic Levels

Table 3

Abbreviations and Definitions of the Study Variables

Coding Categories: Time Use*

Instructional Formats

1) Lec	Lecture- A teacher oral presentation to students in which student questions may be allowed, but teacher questions to students are extremely limited. Any teacher questions are typically answered by the teacher.
2) Rec	Lecture/recitation- A teacher presentation including frequent questions to students. Questions are convergent in nature, necessitate only a brief answer (a word or a phrase), and since the teacher often expects the majority of students to be able to answer the questions, students may answer in chorus.
3) Respon	Lecture/response- A teacher-led segment in which questions to students may be either convergent or divergent, but necessitate a more lengthy response (a phrase or a sentence).
4) Disc	Lecture/discussion- A teacher-led discussion in which the segment is oriented around teacher questions which require a relatively long student response (long phrase or sentence). Questions are more open-ended and there may be evidence of student-student interaction.
5) *Disc	Discussion- The teacher orchestrates student discussion by asking open questions and expecting the students to carry the bulk of the discourse. The teacher is much less directive and prompts a great deal of student-student interaction.
6) Stwk	Seatwork- Students work on a reading, worksheet, or writing task in class, usually at their own pace. Occasionally students may complete seatwork tasks in small groups.
7) Testing	Testing- Any quiz or exam that is a formal assessment of student learning. The task is graded, usually by the teacher at a later time; however, in a few settings students grade each other's work.
8) AV	Audio-Visual- The primary instructional function is carried out by a technological device such as a VCR, film, or filmstrip projector. AV is still coded if the teacher makes a comment of less than one minute during the AV segment.

* Fieldnotes from observations were coded in one minute segments according to the following categories. These variables are typically expressed as a percent of total time.

Instructional Support

9) T-Info	Task Information- The teacher gives directions or instructions (oral or written) concerning a task (homework or in-class). Directions focus on the technical aspects of the assignment, such as the chapter to be read, questions to answer, due date, time frame, point value, or general grading procedure.
10) T-Elab	Task Elaboration- The teacher elaborates on a task assignment by linking it to content previously discussed, engaging students in brief guided practice related to the task, or clearly linking the task to broader goals.
11) Fdbk	Feedback to Students- Oral or written feedback to students concerning performance on in-class, homework, or testing tasks. Feedback may be given to the entire class, or to individual students on a consistent basis. Also included would be information which seeks to improve future performance, such as clarifying evaluative criteria for a task or motivational speeches in regard to student academic performance.

Non-Instructional Formats

12) Grading	Grading- Students and the teacher engage in the technical task of grading a task or a quiz. Includes grading each item, as well as computing and reporting the score.
13) Chores	Organizational Chores- Includes various organizational and administrative tasks such as taking attendance, changing the seating arrangement, or collecting/distributing materials. The attention of the teacher and students is totally directed toward completion of the chore.
14) Beh Mngt	Behavior Management- Time spent managing the behavior of the entire class or individual students. Also included are general lectures concerning behavior, as well as preventative motivational lectures concerning student behavior or attendance.
16) Social	Organized Social- Occurs when the teacher engages the entire class concerning non-academic matters. If the topic commented on by the teacher can be construed to be a current event, and therefore a social studies related issue, the appropriate instructional format is coded.
17) No Task	No Task- Occurs typically when the teacher is occupied and has failed to give the students a task. Frequently occurs at the beginning of class, but may occur at any time.
18) Free Time	Free Time- The teacher deliberately gives students free time to do as they wish. Usually occurs at the end of the period.
19) Interruptions	Interruptions- Class time devoted to typically administrative matters which are not under the control of the teacher. Often consists of public address announcements.

Variables Calculated from Time Coding, Class Characteristics, and Student Behavior

Total Time Use

20) Tot Instr — Total Instructional Time- Represents the sum of time spent in all instructional formats (variables 1-8) expressed as the percent of total time.

21) Tot I-Support — Total Instructional Support- Represents the sum of time spent in all instructional support formats (variables 9-11), expressed as the percent of total time.

22) Tot Non-Instr — Total Non-Instructional Time- Represents the sum of the time spent in non-instructional formats (variables 12-19), expressed as the percent of total time.

Student Oral Involvement

23) % Sts Part — Percent of Students who Participated Orally- The percent of students who participated at least once orally (comment or question) during a class period.

Student Off-Task Behavior

24) % Freq Off-Task — Percent of Students Frequently Off-Task- The percent of students observed to be off-task three or more times during a class period.

Combined Instructional Formats

25) Res:*Disc — Response:*Discussion- The Amount of time spent in the combined instructional format categories (3-5 above) of lecture/response, lecture/discussion, and *discussion. The three categories are combined due to the relatively low occurrence of each.

Table 4

Ability Grouping Structure in US History Classes

School	% Low Income	% Minority~	% Taking ACT	Enrollment	# US Sections	Sections per Level* AP	H	R	B	% AP+H	Sections R	B	Class Size Caps AP	B
Adams	0.4	1.2	97.4	1798	16	3	2	9	2	31.3	56.3	12.5	<28	<20
Truman	4.4	10.6	72.1	1655	16	2	-	10	4	12.5	62.5	25.0	<25	<20
Hoover	11.2	14.5	35.7	1435	13	-	2	11	-	15.4	84.6	-	-	-
Jefferson	22.1	45.4	77.6	3021	29	7	8	8	6	51.7	27.6	20.7	<25	<20
Carter	25.3	62.2	25.1	1472	15	1	-	8	6	6.6	53.3	40.0	-	<24
Grant	37.2	72.1	56.7#	913	16^	-	3	9	4	18.8	56.3	25.0	-	-

~Black and Hispanic students only; Asian students are fairly advantaged.
*Advanced Placement, Honors, Regular, Basic
^Large number of sections due to curricular changes (transition of US requirement from 11th to 10th grade) and uneven class sizes.
#Students are strongly encouraged to take the test, but a much lower % graduate and attend post-secondary institutions.

Table 5

Minority Representation and Text Use by Ability Group in US History Classrooms

School	Teacher	*	Average Class Size	% Minority^ Students/Class	School Average % Minority^	Intended Text Level	Reading Assigned
Adams	Anderson	H	23	0	1.2	Regular	yes
Jefferson	Jewel	H	21	10	45.4	AP/Honors + Reg	yes
Jefferson	Jones	H	22	20	45.4	AP/Honors	yes
Hoover	Hurley	H	13	0	14.5	Regular	yes
Grant	Gage	H	9	56	72.1	Regular	yes
Adams	Anderson	R	17	0	1.2	Regular	yes
Adams	Armstrong	R	26	0	1.2	Regular	yes
Jefferson	Jones	R	24	71	45.4	Regular	yes
Truman	Taney	R	23	4	10.6	Regular	yes
Truman	Taney	R	25	0	10.6	Regular	yes
Truman	Thomas	R	26	0	10.6	Regular	yes
Hoover	Hurley	R	22	18	14.5	Regular	yes
Hoover	Hyde	R	26	8	14.5	Regular	yes
Hoover	Hyde	R	21	0	14.5	Regular	yes
Carter	Clark	R	21	67	62.2	Regular	student paced
Carter	Curtis	R	22	64	62.2	Regular	yes
Carter	Curtis	R	24	54	62.2	Regular	yes
Grant	Gregory	R	20	85	72.1	Regular	no
Adams	Armstrong	B	18	0	1.2	HS Basic	student paced
Jefferson	Jewel	B	20	95	45.4	HS Basic	yes
Truman	Thomas	B	15	0	10.6	HS Basic	no
Carter	Clark	B	17	82	62.2	Junior High	student paced
Grant	Gage	B	18	89	72.1	Junior High	yes
Grant	Gregory	B	7	71	72.1	Regular	no

*Honors, Regular, Basic

^Black and Hispanic students only; Asian students in the area are fairly advantaged.

Table 6

Goals Stated by Teachers Concerning US History Classes*

School/Teacher	1-Content	2-Cultural Literacy	3-Citizenship Education	4-Responsibility	5-Critical Soc. Stud. Skills	6-General Skills
Adams H.S.#						
Mr. Anderson	x	x	x		x	x
Mr. Armstrong	x	x	x		x	(Basic Sts)
Jefferson H.S.#						
Mr. Jewel	x			x	x	(Love Learning)
Mr. Jones					(Research Skills)	(How to learn)
Truman H.S.#						
Mr. Taney	x	x			x	x
Mr. Thomas	x				x	x
Hoover H.S.						
Mr. Hurley	x	x	x			
Mr. Hyde		x				
Carter H.S.						
Mr. Clark	x	x	x			
Mr. Curtis	x	x		x		
Grant H.S.						
Mr. Gage	x	x				
Mr. Gregory	x					
Totals	10	8	4	2	6	6

1-Content: Any goal mentioning the content of US History.
2-Cultural Literacy: Goals concerning cultural information; learning from history and our past mistakes.
3-Citizenship Education: Goals concerning educating students to uphold democratic responsibilities.
4-Responsibility: Developing responsibility or self-discipline in students.
5-Critical Social Studies Skills: Critical thinking skills such as understanding another point of view.
6-General Skills: Primarily reading and writing skills.

* All teachers stated generally that they had the same goals for all of their US classes, no matter what the ability level.
# Schools serving predominantly college-bound students.

Table 7

Characteristics of Academic Work in US History Classes

School	Teacher	Class Level	Written Work				Oral Involvement
			Vocabulary* Terms	Objective Worksheets	Answer* Questions	Writing/ Projects	Average % Time: Response:Discussion
Adams	Anderson	Honors				x	9.72
Adams	Anderson	Regular				x	6.66
Adams	Armstrong	Regular			text	x	2.23
Adams	Armstrong	Basic		x		x	5.56
Jefferson	Jewel	Honors				x	8.54
Jefferson	Jewel	Basic			text	x	7.42
Jefferson	Jones	Honors			teacher	x	9.59
Jefferson	Jones	Regular			teacher	x	7.64
Truman	Taney	Regular	teacher		teacher	x	2.67
Truman	Taney	Regular	teacher		teacher	x	2.22
Truman	Thomas	Regular	teacher	x		(In-Class)	0.22
Truman	Thomas	Basic		(In-Class)			0.22
Hoover	Hurley	Honors		x		x	1.24
Hoover	Hurley	Regular	text	x			0.74
Hoover	Hyde	Regular	text	x	text		0.00
Hoover	Hyde	Regular	text	x	text		1.48
Carter	Clark	Regular		x			2.60
Carter	Clark	Basic		x			3.67
Carter	Curtis	Regular	text	x			0.40
Carter	Curtis	Regular	text	x			1.00
Grant	Gage	Honors			teacher	x	0.71
Grant	Gage	Basic		x	teacher		1.65
Grant	Gregory	Regular		(In-Class)			0.00
Grant	Gregory	Basic		(In-Class)			0.84

*Teacher generated or text based.

Table 8

Accountability for Academic Work in US History Classes

Teacher	*	Homework Begun In Class	Grading: Teacher In Class	Grading: Student In Class	Teacher Type	Lack of Clarity/ Timeliness^	Feedback: # Instances	Feedback: Written On Tasks	Feedback: Oral To Class
Anderson	H				thorough		4	3	1
Anderson	R				thorough		4	2	2
Armstrong	R				thorough	x	2	1	1
Armstrong	B	x			thorough	x	8	4	4
Jewel	H				thorough		9	3	6
Jewel	B				thorough		18	5	13
Jones	H				thorough	x	4	3	1
Jones	R				thorough	x	2	1	1
Taney	R				combination		3	1	2
Taney	R				combination		2	-	2
Thomas	R		x		combination		3	1	2
Thomas	B	Replaces HW	x		combination		9	3	6
Hurley	H				thorough		2	-	2
Hurley	R		x	x	cursory		2	-	2
Hyde	R	x	x	x	cursory	x	2	-	2
Hyde	R	x	x	x	cursory	x	2	-	2
Clark	R	x			infrequent	x	4	2	2
Clark	B	x			infrequent	x	4	-	4
Curtis	R	x	x	x	cursory		6	2	4
Curtis	R	x	x	x	cursory		8	3	5
Gage	H			x	infrequent	x	4	1	3
Gage	B			x	infrequent	x	1	1	-
Gregory	R	Replaces HW	x	x	infrequent	x	2	2	-
Gregory	B	Replaces HW	x	x	infrequent	x	-	-	-

*Honors, Regular, Basic

^In regard to task due dates and feedback

Table 9

Comparison of Teacher History Background, Reading Habits, Goals, and Tasks Assigned

School	Teacher	*	History Equivalent^			Reading Habits~			Goals#		Tasks		
			>/= Major w/Grad	Major BA	Minor BA	+	Ave.	-	Content	Skills	Homework In-Class	Work-sheets	Writing/ Projects
Adams	Anderson	H	x			x				x			x
Jefferson	Jewel	H	x			x				x			x
Jefferson	Jones	H	x			x				x			x
Hoover	Hurley	H			x		x		x			x	x
Grant	Gage	H	x			x			x				x
Adams	Anderson	R	x			x				x			x
Adams	Armstrong	R	x			x				x			x
Jefferson	Jones	R	x			x				x			x
Truman	Taney	R	x			x				x			x
Truman	Taney	R	x			x				x			x
Truman	Thomas	R	x			x				x		x	(In-class)
Hoover	Hurley	R			x		x		x			x	
Hoover	Hyde	R		x			x		x		x	x	
Hoover	Hyde	R		x			x		x		x	x	
Carter	Clark	R			x			x	x		x	x	
Carter	Curtis	R			x		x		x		x	x	
Carter	Curtis	R			x		x		x		x	x	
Grant	Gregory	R			x			x	x		Replaces HW	x	
Adams	Armstrong	B	x			x				x	x	x	x
Jefferson	Jewel	B	x			x				x			x
Truman	Thomas	B	x			x				x	Replaces HW	x	
Carter	Clark	B			x			x	x		x	x	
Grant	Gage	B	x			x			x			x	
Grant	Gregory	B			x			x	x		Replaces HW	x	

* Honors, Regular, Basic

~ History Equivalent= Amount of history background; graduate (grad) or undergraduate (BA) level.

^ Reading Habits- (+) Strong: history books and journals; Average: weekly newsmagazines and K-12 texts; (-) Weak: occasional reference to K-12 texts or newsmagazines.

Goals= Content 1-4 (content, culture, citizenship); Skills= 1-4 + 5-6 (general and critical thinking skills).